

adjusting the slip of the torque converter in accordance with a setpoint value while closing the torque-converter lockup clutch, the setpoint value continuously selected inside a closing interval as a function of time and taking into account the input torque currently applied to the torque converter .

17. (New) The method as recited in Claim 16,
wherein a preselected time characteristic is taken into account for the time-dependence of the setpoint value, said time characteristic converting the slip existing at the beginning of the closing interval as an initial value into a target value within the closing interval.

18. (New) The method as recited in Claim 17,
wherein the time characteristic includes a linear transition from the initial value to the target value inside the closing interval.

32 19. (New) The method as recited in Claim 17, further comprising monitoring the input torque applied to the torque converter inside the closing interval, said monitoring including ascertaining the slip of the torque converter and taking said slip of the torque converter as a new value when the input torque changes by more than a specifiable tolerance deviation, said new value appearing at this input torque in the case of a completely opened torque-converter lockup clutch.

20. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19,
further comprising selecting the value resulting from the preselected time characteristic for the current time inside the closing interval as the setpoint value for the slip, the time characteristic converting the initial value ascertained using the currently applied input torque into the target value.

21. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19,
wherein the slip to be used as a new initial value and as a basis for the applied input torque is determined using a stored characteristics map.

22. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19,

wherein the slip to be used as a new initial value and as a basis for the applied input torque is calculated from the applied input torque taking into account the performance figure of the torque converter.

23. (New) The method as recited in claim 17,
further comprising providing a controlled parameter for setting a clamping pressure for the torque converter for adjusting the slip.

24. (New) The method as recited in Claim 17,
further comprising detecting the start of power transmission in the torque-converter lockup clutch by monitoring the time characteristic of the slip for a decline.

25. (New) The method as recited in Claim 24,
further comprising setting a clamping pressure for the torque converter as a function of a coupling torque to be transmitted after a decrease in the slip is detected and as a function of the setpoint value for the slip of the torque-converter lockup clutch.

26. (New) A control device for a torque-converter lockup clutch for a hydrodynamic torque converter, comprising:
a control unit; and
a sensor connected to the control unit, said sensor configured to detect input torque applied to the torque converter, said control unit configured to select a setpoint value for the slip of the torque converter as a function of time and taking into consideration the input torque currently being applied to the torque converter.

27. (New) The control device as recited in Claim 26,
wherein the control unit is connected on an output side to an arrangement configured to set a clamping pressure for the torque converter.

28. (New) The control device as recited in Claim 26,
wherein the control unit is connected to a data storage unit configured to store a time characteristic for the setpoint value, said control unit configured to

convert a slip existing at the beginning of a closing interval as an initial value into a target value within the closing interval in accordance with the time characteristic for the setpoint value of the slip.

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29. (New) The control device as recited in Claim 28,
wherein a data record is stored in the data storage unit, said control unit configured to derive from the data record a slip value for each input torque and in accordance with said slip value as an initial value and as a basis to determine the setpoint value for the slip as a function of time.

30. (New) The control device as recited in Claim 28,
wherein the data storage unit includes a characteristics map, which, inside specifiable interval boundaries, includes a slip value for each corresponding performance figure of the torque converter.--.

REMARKS

I. Introduction

With the addition of claims 16 to 30, claims 1 to 30 are currently pending in this application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants note with appreciation the acknowledgment of the claim for foreign priority and the receipt of all certified copies of the priority documents.

Applicants note with the appreciation the acceptance of the drawings filed on October 12, 2001.

II. Rejection of Claim 7 Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as indefinite for allegedly failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. Applicants submit that claim 7, as amended, overcomes the 35 U.S.C. § 112 rejection. Therefore, withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §112 rejection is respectfully requested.